

MEETING MINUTES
STATE SOIL CONSERVATION BOARD MEETING
May 21, 2019
Franklin County Library

State Soil Conservation Board Meeting, Franklin County Library, May 21, 2019 Minutes

Members Present:

Warren Baird
Amy Burris
Brad Dawson

Larry Clemens
Kenny Cain
Ray Chattin

Members Absent:

Bob Eddleman

Others Present:

Jordan Seger
Laura Fribley
Toby Hollinger
Lisa Hollars
Geneva Tyler

Joe Schmees
Roger Wenning
Mike Johnson
Ben Wicker
Cindy Newkirk

Katie Hardin
Frank Jones
Lisa MacPhee
Kenna Porter
Tara Wesseler-Henry

Call to Order: Larry Clemens called the meeting to order at 9:30AM and welcomed everyone. Board members and meeting attendees introduced themselves.

Approve Minutes of March 2019: Larry Clemens asked for amendments or changes. Hearing none, Brad Dawson moved to approve the minutes. Warren Baird seconded. All win favor. Motion Carried.

Clean Water Indiana Grants: Jordan Seger presented. He highlighted the written report including the 2019 CWI Competitive Grants, Non- SWCD Led Projects, Grant Reviews, Training Reimbursement/Sponsorship, AFR, and ICP Reports. Larry Clemens asked Ray Chattin how the SICIM grant was going. Ray shared it was on pace.

State Soil Conservation Board Business Chairman's Report: Larry Clemens shared that he has accepted the Indiana State Director position with TNC. It's been a great ride being the North American Agriculture Program Director and it's attractive to be back in his home state.

Soil and Water Conservation Districts: The following supervisor nominations were reviewed as a group. Tara Wesseler-Henry presented Dearborn, Delaware, Monroe, and Pike counties; Laura Fribley presented Steuben County.

- a. Dearborn: Darla Alford, temporary elected position
- b. Delaware: Debra Carpenter, temporary elected position
- c. Monroe: Georgia Davis, temporary elected position

- d. Monroe: Ryan Conway, vacant appointed position
- e. Pike: Brad Smith, vacant appointed position
- f. Steuben: Kayleen Hart, vacant appointed position

Larry Clemens facilitated the vote but refrained from voting because of his and Brad Smith's affiliations to TNC. Warren Baird made a motion to approve the nominations, Ray Chatten seconded. All in favor. Motion carried.

ISDA Updates

- a. **Director's Report:** presented by Jordan Seger
 - Jordan shared information on the Water Subcabinet meeting he and Julie Harrold attended in Louisiana, the Hypoxia Task Force and discussions related to communication plan needs. We have a huge story to tell. The group has strong leadership. Another piece is collecting and sharing information. Indiana is the only state that has a 1619 agreement. It helps us pump out the maps. We need to get a better handle on what we're doing and communicate these accomplishments. We are in a key leadership position and it all goes back to the Partnership. There's a huge story to tell within the 12 states about cover crops that have been planted, especially since the farm economy hasn't been great.
 - *Staffing:* about a dozen people have been interviewed for the Director's job. Cassidy Rohrig has been hired as a Resource Specialist in the Greensburg area. Meg Leader has taken a position with NACD and is still in communication with ISDA. We have interviewed a number of candidates and will find a good person. 8 summer interns are coming on board. Glad to have you Kenna.
 - *Budget items:* just wrapped up our legislative session. We did see a small bump, about \$30k in the cigarette tax. Dedicated fund of both CWI and DSC, about \$60,000 total bump there. We did get a 3% reversion in CWI general funds, so we went to \$970,000 from \$1 million. No other big changes. ISDA did get a small bump in our grain buyers division. The LG did get an increase in her budget and discussions will be had if ISDA and the DSC would get any benefit from any of those dollars. We had some staffing requests this session.
 - *Ag happenings in this session:*
 - Industrial hemp was the probably the biggest issue we got involved with as a department. It relates to conservation because the Farm Bill says conservation can happen on hemp fields just like corn or soybeans. Office of the State Chemist housed in Purdue is regulatory authority over industrial hemp. ISDA will play more of a marketing and industry development and economic development role. About 3,000 acres are being planted now in Indiana under a research permit but at the end of the day they can sell that product on the open market. That's different from last year. ISDA, State Chemist, and State Police are putting together our state plan for industrial hemp and we will be

submitting that to USDA. The 2020 growing season will be when we see the space open up, with a license and minimum acreage required. Our state legislation banned smokeable hemp because it creates a big problem for law enforcement. Companies are looking to set up shop for CBD oil or different things like that.

- *Kankakee River Basin* – the legislature reduced the size of the commission significantly. We did have SWCD staff serving on board seats but now with this change the County Executives will appoint who represents. They did pass a tax assessment in the Kankakee River Basin.
- *District Business*: we have had a few examples of lawsuits pop up. This has caused ISDA to work with the IASWCD to look at insurance coverage for Supervisors or District as well as what kind of legal support the state can provide, e.g. Attorney General. ISDA will provide further updates as we get more information.
- Larry Clemens asked about the Kankakee River basin and how much across the state line discussion was taking place and how much coordination has been taking place with Illinois. Jordan replied there's a lot of history there. The city of Kankakee, our states' legislatures, and Farm Bureau have been involved and collaborating. Bob Barr has been involved with pilot projects of putting meanders back in the stream, how to use trees as bank stabilization tools, and other similar measures.
- Roger Wenning commented about the cover crops, the low grain prices, and that the state is still increased cover crops here in spite of low grain prices comments. I want to be careful and make sure we push this out to our production people. It helps our bottom line. Without cover crops I'd be struggling to make payments. With them, they have helped me increase my profits. Discussion followed. Landowners are one audience, and general audiences that may not understand.

b. **Technical Report:** presented by Mike Johnson

- Mike highlighted the written report. Southeast Indiana: looking at 9 active CWI grants with 14 counties, some with involved with more than one grant. SharePoint indicates 75 practices designed and ready to be installed though there could be a larger number because some counties wait to enter them until they are complete. 8 EPA 319 grants involving 15 counties. 2 LARE grants. INFA: highs and lows, some dropping out and some will continue forward due to the way it was restructured. Cassidy Rohrig has been hired. She is a wealth of knowledge. With CRP opening up, CREP workload should be increased.

A 10 minute break was taken and the meeting resumed at 10:33AM.

c. **Soil Health/Accountability and Technology Report:** presented by Jordan Seger

- Jordan presented the 2018 Fall Living Covers Planted in All Crops map and discussions on tillage transects. Cindy Newkirk commented when they go to satellites, numbers may jump over the current data collected via tillage transects. Jordan commented

there's been engagement with satellite stuff and companies with remote sensing imagery. We are the only state in the country that has data that goes back to 1990. The Environmental Working Group released a report on IN, IL, and IA on cover crops and cost share. Ag Census did just come out for 2017. We've been overtaken by IA on cover crops by a few thousand acres. They've been able to figure out a way to give a crop insurance incentive working with Risk Management Agency and I think it's worth our state exploring. 2018 ICP Conservation Accomplishments report: Jordan touched on major highlights and maps including financials and numbers of ag acres with newly completed and applied conservation practices in 2018 and 2018 load Reductions. These statewide maps can be broken down on request to certain areas or watersheds, and have been created for congressional districts and for state legislature. Beyond these one pagers, requests are taken by researchers or other groups that want more in-depth information by visiting the website. Props to Trevor Laureys, Leah Harmon, Deb Fairhurst and everybody for working on all of this. Brad Dawson asked how this will get out to people. A press release will go out on tillage transect and cover crops this week. Trevor also does internal communications with groups. Conversation ensued about how to get this information to SWCD Supervisors. DSSs and RSs can get this information to board meetings when they're out as well as through email communications. We need to get this information into other groups' hands like IFB. Ben Wicker can help get this out to his groups.

d. **District Support:** presented by Laura Fribley

- Laura highlighted the written report including the Summer SWCD Supervisor and Staff Trainings. IASWCD and DSSs have worked together to plan trainings for August. If any SSCB members are interested in any of those specific dates we can get you on the registration list. These August meetings are a combination of the traditional spring region meetings ISDA hosted, and the fall/winter region meetings hosted by IASWCD.

e. **Water Quality & CREP:** presented by Jordan Seger

- Jordan highlighted the written report. The big thing with CREP is we've been on hold due to Farm Bill implementation with CRP. It's opened back up which is awesome. Our most popular practice has been Bottomland Timber and Wetland Restoration with CREP. We're looking to take advantage of this CRP and CREP reopening. Also, Julie Harrold's been working with Ben Wicker and team and some of the Partners on how we could get a list/chart of practices with associated load reductions ranges to each practice. This would be based off literature reviews researchers have done. It would bring researchers to consensus. Hoping to find some funders and will have good news soon. Larry Clemens commented he had a team of PhD students that did the same thing looking on a Midwest level. Let him know how he can help. Chris Johnson can point you to where the good data is. Ben Wicker commented the water quality issue may not be the reason the farmer adopts, but it gives us that additional piece of information. We hear consistently, show us the data, and this will help us build consistency.

Conservation Partner Reports

- a. **IASWCD Report:** presented by Roger Wenning
 - o Roger highlighted the written report. Pathway will have a coordinator again for 2019 thanks to all the ICP Partners. Volunteer sign up opens June 3. Legislative session- it didn't work so well this year but we have a lot of ideas on how to move forward. We're discussing and will have a new plan next year. Other surrounding states' districts are supported much better than Indiana's. We're going to work on it and see what we can do. RFF applications are currently open on the website. We'd like all Partners to be present for the RFF Ceremony. The next state Board meeting will be June 20 at the Morgan Monroe Training Center. The Board will do some planning at this meeting. The SWCD Conference Planning committee had a meeting and NRCS Matt Lohr has been invited to be our keynote speaker. He's hosting the SWCS annual meeting at his farm.
- b. **IDEM Report:** none
- c. **DNR Report:** none
- d. **Purdue Report:** none
- e. **FSA Report:** Toby Hollinger presented
 - o Continuous CRP opens June 3 and closes August 23. Discussion ensued about continuous sign up, general sign up, and reenrollments.
- f. **NRCS Report:** presented by Frank Jones
 - o Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) deadline was May 10. They're working on extensions of the 2014 CSP contracts. Agricultural Conservation Easement Program: most of legwork was done back in April. Big Pine Regional Partnership Program/Western Lake Erie Basin: deadline to receive applications is June 21 in those counties. NRCS staffing changes: six DC positions are out and we're waiting for these positions to be filled. 2nd priority are our specialist positions like Soil Scientists and we have FOA positions that are available. 3rd priority is the planning team leads. I'm in the Leadership Program here in IN. We'll be meeting with a lot of the conservation leaders in the state.
- g. **CCSI:** presented by Joe Schmees
 - o We're currently without a Northern Programs Manager. In person interviews are next week. Past events include two CCSI/SARE no till pumpkin trainings for ICP staff, one buyer seed event, and the Indiana Lakes Management Society speaking engagement. Other events: April 11 and May 17 Advanced Soil Health Systems, and no till cover crop production pumpkin focus. June 3-5 Soil Health Training. August 12 regional ag forum in the Big Creek Watershed in Gibson County. May's newsletter had high open rate of 26.4%. Soil Health podcast through Hoosier Ag today are now available for subscription. Jordan commented he emailed the written report to SSCB members.
- h. **IDEA:** presented by Cindy Newkirk

- Presented written report. There are 9 Region Directors since there's a co-director. We have 146 paid IDEA members. Membership is \$25. Poster contest winners are on the back sheet. The 2019 poster contest will be coming in June. Fall Conference 2018 was at Lake Monroe with 104 attendees. This year will be at Clifty Falls State Park. We give scholarship winners to attendees. Another Partnership calendar will be created and will include poster winners and this will be handed out at Annual Conference. Region Directors meet with staff in their regions at least quarterly to help reinforce interaction and learning from others. Silent auction will be in 2020 at Annual Conference.
- i. **IANA:** presented by Ben Wicker
 - Since our formal incorporation and me coming on as Director just over a year ago, really focused on getting some of the foundational things set as an organization. Bringing the 14 partners that make up the IANA together. Highlight was getting all partners to agree upon these statewide practice adoption goals. Outreach this year really focused on getting the word out about IANA and the goals in particular and how they want to operate. I was involved in over 50 different speaking engagements. We distributed over 2000 pieces, our website was developed, and over 12 news articles. Looking to next year, priorities are around diving deeper into communication around these goals and that the partners are getting connected. Really looking at science assessment side as an aligning piece as we discussed earlier so we can come to agreement on practices and their impacts.
- f. **Public comment:** none

Board Members: Warren Baird asked Jordan if these reports get to each SWCD office. Jordan said they are posted online. We don't do any specific outreach to Chairman. Warren said the maps Jordan presented would be of interest to each SWCD. Discussion followed. Jordan said we could do a communication to say here is the link to find these reports and DSS staff will make sure it's consistently followed up on across the state so that Supervisors, especially chairman, sees this information. ISDA will follow up on how we can do this.

Ray Chattin said we're due to revisit our business plan. It runs through 2020. Larry and Jordan will get together to discuss an appropriate plan. They'll put a plan of action together for the next board meeting.
- g. **Adjourn:** Kenny Cain motioned to adjourn at 11:44AM, Amy seconded, all were in favor.